



THE TRUST FUND FOR VICTIMS
INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT



“MAKING VISIBLE THE PLIGHT OF VICTIMS OF CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY AND WAR CRIMES IN NORTHERN UGANDA”

OUTCOMES OF THE 2024 CONSULTATIONS ON THE ICC
ONGWEN REPARATIONS ORDER CONDUCTED BY THE ICC TRUST
FUND FOR VICTIMS WITH VICTIMS IN NORTHERN UGANDA

JUNE 2025

Table of Contents

I. Background	5
II. Rationale	8
III. Methodology	10
IV. Victims of the case and Harms suffered	11
A. Victims Consulted	11
B. Types of Harm Suffered	12
• Physical Harm	13
• Moral Harm	13
• Material Harm	13
• Community Harm	13
• Transgenerational Harm	14
• Stigma as an emerging issue	14
V. Survivors' experiences and expectations for reparations	15
A. Individual Symbolic Payments	15
1. Cash-in-hand payments	16
2. Mobile money transfers	17
3. Bank transfers	18
4. Trend variations	18
B. Collective Community-based Rehabilitation measures	20
1. Physical Rehabilitation	20
2. Psychosocial Rehabilitation	21
3. Socio-economic Rehabilitation	24
4. Trend Variations	27

C. Collective Symbolic and Satisfaction Measures	30
1. Cleansing ceremonies, exhumations & reburials, memorials and monuments	30
2. Cultural activities	32
3. Religious activities	32
4. Other Community activities	32
5. Apology	33
6. Trend Variations	34
VI. The Role of Stakeholders	36
A. The Role of Local Council Officers	37
B. The Role of Religious Leaders	38
C. Role of Cultural Leaders	39
D. Role and Views of High-level District Officers	41
E. Role of Civil Society	42

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ARLPI — Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative
DCDO — District Community Development Officer
DIP — Draft Implementation Plan
EUR — Euro
GUSCO — Gulu Support the Children Organisation
ICC — International Criminal Court
ICT — Information and Communications Technology
IDP — Internally Displaced Persons
KICWA — Kitgum Concerned Women's Association
KKA — Ker Kwaro Acholi
LC1 / LCIII / LCV — Local Council One / Local Council Three / Local Council Five
LRA — Lord's Resistance Army
NGO — Non-Governmental Organisation
NIRA — National Identification and Registration Authority
PDM — Parish Development Model
PTSD — Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
SGBC — Sexual and Gender-Based Crimes
SGBV — Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
TFV — Trust Fund for Victims
UGX — Ugandan Shilling
VPRS — Victims Participation and Reparations Section
VSLA — Village Savings and Loan Association

Presentation

This report presents the outcomes of the consultations on the ICC Ongwen Reparations Order, conducted between April and June 2024 with victims in northern Uganda by the Trust Fund for Victims (TFV). These consultations were organised following the issuance of the Reparations Order in February 2024 in the Ongwen case before the ICC. Their purpose was to gather inputs for the TFV's submission to the ICC Chamber of the Draft Implementation Plan for the Ongwen Reparations Programme.

The consultations, in which 2,715 potentially eligible victims took part, were organised in line with the Reparation Principles to ensure a victim-centred approach to the design and implementation of reparation measures.

The views expressed by victims during the consultations were essential in shaping the design of the reparation measures and formed the main foundation of the Draft Implementation Plan, which was submitted in September 2024 and approved by the Chamber in February 2025.

This report compiles and presents those views in a publicly accessible written format.

It is published in line with the TFV's mandate to make visible the plight of victims, as provided in its Regulations. Its wide dissemination aims to enhance understanding, foster support and collaboration, attract financial contributions to the programme, and inform other activities and efforts complementary to reparations. The consultations and the preparation of this report were made possible through the financial contribution of the Embassy of the Netherlands in Kampala. They were achievable only thanks to the support, trust and enthusiasm of the communities of Pajule, Odek, Lukodi and Abok; the collaboration of the legal representatives of victims and ICC translators; and the engagement of all stakeholders, including civil society organisations, government representatives, district and community leaders in and around the case locations, and victims' associations and organisations.

The TFV is honoured to continue serving the interests of victims by addressing the harms they have suffered in a way that communities recognise as meaningful redress. In doing so, the TFV seeks to support a future in northern Uganda, and in Uganda more broadly, in which affected individuals and communities feel acknowledged and empowered, and in which new possibilities for healing, recovery and development can emerge.

The Hague, June 2025

All photographs reproduced in this publication are the property of the Trust Fund for Victims, International Criminal Court, unless otherwise credited. The individuals depicted have given their informed consent to be photographed and to the use of their image by the Trust Fund for Victims for institutional, informational and awareness-raising purposes. The inclusion of any photograph does not imply, and shall not be construed as implying, any statement as to the legal status of any individual depicted, including their status as a victim or beneficiary in any proceedings before the International Criminal Court. No photograph contained in this publication may be reproduced, distributed or otherwise used, in whole or in part, without the prior written authorisation of the Trust Fund for Victims.

I. BACKGROUND

On 4 February 2021, Dominic Ongwen, a high-level member of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) was found guilty by the ICC Trial Chamber IX of a total of 61 counts, comprising crimes against humanity and war crimes, committed in northern Uganda between 1 July 2002 and 31 December 2005. He was sentenced to 25 years' imprisonment on 6 May 2021. Both the conviction and the sentence were confirmed on appeal in December 2022.

Ongwen was found guilty of the following crimes:

Attacks against the civilian population as such, murder, attempted murder, torture, enslavement, outrages upon personal dignity, pillaging, destruction of property and persecution; committed in the context of the four specified attacks on the Internally Displaced Persons camps ("IDP camps") Pajule (10 October 2003), Odek (29 April 2004), Lukodi (on or about 19 May 2004) and Abok (8 June 2004);

Sexual and gender-based crimes, namely, forced marriage, torture, rape, sexual slavery, enslavement, forced pregnancy and outrages upon personal dignity he committed against seven women (whose individual stories are specified in the judgment) who were abducted and placed into his household;

A number of further sexual and gender-based crimes he committed against girls and women within the Sinia brigade, namely forced marriage, torture, rape, sexual slavery and enslavement;

The crime of conscripting children under the age of 15 into the Sinia brigade and using them to participate actively in hostilities.

The Chamber found that these crimes were committed in the context of the armed rebellion of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) against the government of Uganda. The LRA, including Dominic Ongwen, perceived the civilians living in the government-established IDP camps as associated with the government of Uganda, and thus as the enemy. LRA commanders routinely declared that civilians were failing to support the LRA in its effort against the government and should be killed by the LRA. Throughout the period of the charges, the LRA killed and injured a large number of civilians in numerous attacks on individual civilians, IDP camps and other civilian locations in northern Uganda. The LRA also abducted and conscripted a large number of children under the age of 15 into the armed group and used them to participate actively in hostilities. Finally, the LRA abducted and also enslaved a large number of female civilians. They were then used as sexual slaves and so-called 'wives', and as domestic servants.

Subsequent to the conviction in 2021, on 28 February 2024, Trial Chamber IX issued a Reparations Order against Mr Ongwen. The Chamber estimated that the total number of potentially eligible direct and indirect victims of the crimes for which Mr Ongwen was convicted, for the purposes of determining his liability for reparations, is approximately **49,772 victims**. As such, the Trial Chamber ordered a combination of individual and collective reparative measures for direct and indirect victims, including a symbolic award of **EUR 750** for all eligible victims; collective rehabilitation measures for the community addressing the long-term impact of the attacks; and other collective symbolic and satisfaction measures. These reparations aim to address the victims' immediate and long-term needs, ensuring a comprehensive approach to their rehabilitation and recognition.

On the forms of reparations called for, the Chamber considered that collective community-based reparations are the most appropriate type of reparations to address the collective harm suffered by the victims of the crimes for which Mr Ongwen was convicted. The Chamber clarified that collective community-based reparations refer to both the group that will receive reparations and the mode in which the measures will be delivered. With respect to the group that will receive reparations, it is important to note that the Chamber is referring to the community of eligible victims in this case, not northern Uganda's war-affected community at large. Regarding the mode in which reparations are delivered, the Chamber is referring to community-oriented measures and programmes that can reach large numbers of victims in a less resource-intensive manner. In the Chamber's view, the primary reason why collective community-based reparations are appropriate and necessary in this case is to respond to the widespread extent of the harm suffered by the majority of eligible victims. Without going into further detail in this report, the Chamber acknowledged the desire for individual reparations, yet remained convinced, for the reasons described in the Reparations Order, that a collective award that addresses the entire community of eligible victims will ensure a more efficient, prompt and practical approach¹.

In terms of *prioritisation* of the measures, the Chamber called for the payment of monetary symbolic awards prior to rehabilitation and other symbolic measures. In terms of prioritisation for the administration of the measures amongst the victims, it recognised three categories, placing priority of measures on vulnerable victims in *dire need of urgent assistance*, followed by vulnerable victims directly participating in the case, followed by all other vulnerable victims.

Amongst the victims recognised were victims of the armed attacks on the IDP camps in the four case locations (Pajule, Odek, Lukodi, Abok) consisting of war crimes and crimes against humanity ranging from attacks on civilians, murder, attempted murder and torture, enslavement, pillaging, outrages upon personal dignity, destruction of property and persecution. Also amongst the victims recognised were those of "thematic crimes" which constituted sexual and gender-based crimes, such as forced marriage; torture, rape and sexual slavery; forced pregnancy; outrages upon personal dignity; and enslavement. These resulted in another category of victims, children born out of forced marriage, forced pregnancy, rape and sexual slavery. Another significant percentage of victims of thematic crimes were child soldiers, which was a signature war tactic used by the LRA to enhance their forces. These were children conscripted under the age of 15 and forced to participate in hostilities.

The Trial Chamber set the financial liability of Mr Ongwen at EUR 52,429,000, and invited, inter alia, the Trust Fund for Victims (TFV) to submit a draft implementation plan (DIP) by 3 September 2024. To this end, the Trial Chamber instructed the TFV to consult with the victims on "the nature of the collective community-based awards and the methods of implementation"² and consider their views and proposals when designing the draft implementation plan.

¹ The Prosecutor v. Dominic Ongwen: Summary of the Reparations Order 28 February 2024.

² Para. 799.

The Trial Chamber emphasised the importance for the TFV to ensure that it conducts consultations in compliance with the Principles on Reparations, as adopted in its Order, including the ‘do no harm’ principle, the guarantee of accessibility and meaningful participation of victims, the exercise of respect for their diversity as to their particular needs and interests, including gender-specific considerations, and consideration of any obstacles victims may face in coming forward and expressing their views.³ The order further mandates the TFV to conduct consultations with other key stakeholders such as religious and cultural leaders, and civil society actors from northern Uganda, and the diplomatic community and heads of relevant line government ministries, for the delivery of reparations to victims of Dominic Ongwen’s crimes.

This led to the design of the DIP, which was informed by the victims’ and stakeholder consultations. The DIP, adopted in February 2025, includes key components on what and how it will go about implementing the order. Its key components include: collective community-based rehabilitation measures (physical, psychological and socio-economic); collective community-based symbolic and satisfaction measures; and programme-wide measures which include a participatory mechanism to ensure inclusive and broad participation of victims in the design and implementation phase of the order.

³ Para. 799.

II. RATIONALE

As per the Reparations Order, the TFV was instructed to consult with the victims on the nature of the collective community-based awards and the methods of implementation. In so doing, the TFV was to consider the victims' views and proposals for the design of the proposed projects. In line with the Order, the TFV undertook victim consultations in the four case locations (Pajule, Odek, Lukodi, Abok) and Gulu city, between 30 April and 26 June 2024. A total of 2,715 potentially eligible victims were consulted, including 2,464 victims at the four case locations and 251 victims of thematic crimes. Follow-up sessions with 60 victims from the four case locations and survivors of thematic crimes were held in Gulu in February 2025 to gather proposals on the design of the participatory approach and mechanism proposed in the DIP.

In giving effect to the Reparations Order, the Trust Fund for Victims sought to adopt a victim-centred approach in the design and implementation of the reparation measures. This called for meaningful consultation and engagement with the community of potentially eligible victims in the case, to enable them to make significant contributions to the design and implementation of the programme and allow them to shape the measures according to their respective harms and needs.

The objective of these consultations was to engage with the community of eligible victims affected by the actions of Mr Ongwen, as outlined in the Reparations Order. The consultations aimed to gather input, perspectives and preferences from the affected community and key stakeholders regarding the design and implementation of the ordered collective community-based reparations. The consultations therefore adopted a participatory and inclusive approach to gather the information sought.

The specific objectives behind the consultations included:

Clarification of the content of the Reparations Order, whereby the TFV team explained the rationale behind collective community-based reparations, emphasising their potential to contribute to healing, reconciliation and the restoration of dignity;

Providing victims with the opportunity to express their views regarding the Reparations Order;

Documenting victim views and expectations regarding the design and implementation of the reparation measures;

Creating a space for victims to share their experiences, concerns and aspirations;

Building trust and participation in the implementation process;

Informing the design of the DIP and promoting a victim-centred approach.

In its pursuit of designing reparations that truly resonate with victims, the TFV actively solicited victims' input on the full range of measures to be delivered, encompassing rehabilitation and collective symbolic and satisfaction measures aimed at acknowledging the victims' collective suffering and recognising their resilience, while promoting a sense of justice and closure. In addition, the TFV also sought views from victims and key stakeholders on the implementation of the monetary payments to identify the most appropriate modality relevant to the communities in their context.

The TFV placed particular emphasis on discussing the potential symbolic and satisfaction measures. To be relevant and responsive to the community of victims, these measures should be informed by the cultural and historical context of the affected communities, ensuring that they reflect the nuances and aspirations of those directly impacted by the crimes for which Mr Ongwen was convicted. By fostering an inclusive dialogue and honouring the diverse perspectives of victims, the TFV aims to craft reparation initiatives that not only address the harm suffered but also promote community healing, reconciliation and non-repetition.

Overall, the consultations sought to cultivate an environment of trust, transparency and accountability by actively involving victims in decision-making processes concerning the design and subsequent implementation of the reparation measures. The TFV recognises that empowering victims to contribute to the design, monitoring and evaluation of programmes is essential in ensuring that their voices are not only heard but respected throughout the process.

By fostering meaningful victim participation, the TFV aims to build trust in the reparations process and demonstrate its commitment to upholding victims' rights and a victim-centred approach, which in turn promotes restoration of victim dignity and meaningful healing, reconciliation and non-repetition. The consultations therefore sought to identify the most appropriate methods to achieve implementation of the measures.

Finally, the DIP that was developed by the TFV was informed by the critical insights and recommendations generated from the victim consultations. The consultations provided an opportunity for the TFV to adopt a victim-centred approach and apply best practices in reparations programming, recognising the unique experiences and views of affected communities. By championing the voices of victims and integrating their perspectives into programming, the TFV strives to ensure that the reparations process is not only responsive to the needs of victims but aligned with the principles of justice, dignity and victim empowerment.



Victim community of Odek attending a consultation meeting organised by the Trust Fund at Odek centre.

III. METHODOLOGY

The consultations were guided by certain key principles adopted in the Ntaganda Reparations Order and subsequently reinforced and expanded in the Ongwen Reparations Order. The two principles that characterised the order focused on victim-centredness and child-centredness. By applying this lens, the Chamber approached and expanded notions of harm (considering the effects of the crimes on the victims) and the notions of the community, placing greater consideration on collective harm and transgenerational harm. Drawing from these principles and building on previous Court jurisprudence on reparations, this Order went on to particularly recognise: (i) the symbolic (not compensatory) nature of monetary payments, which it deemed not to be proportional or appropriate to address the harm; (ii) rehabilitation as a measure required to improve victims' socio-economic situation in addition to medical or psychosocial needs; (iii) that child victims can constitute not only victims who were children at the time the crimes were committed, but also those who were born as a result of such crimes (sexual and gender-based crimes), as well as the need to adopt the four main principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and a child-rights approach.

Other key principles which guided the consultations included: do-no-harm; respecting dignity and ensuring non-discrimination and non-stigmatisation; special considerations for child victims and victims of sexual and gender-based crimes (SGBC); a victim-centred approach focused on accessibility and consultations; and adopting a gender-sensitive and inclusive approach to reparations.⁴ In addition, the Ntaganda principles established that reparations should be proportional, prompt, adequate and transformative, and that priority should be given to the most vulnerable victims.⁵

In line with this guiding framework, consultations sought to be inclusive, participatory and accessible to the various communities of victims in all four case locations, as well as specially tailored and targeted to the victims of thematic crimes, largely women victims of SGBC, their children and child soldiers. This was done by holding separate meetings led by female members of the TFV team with this target group, providing them a safe space to express their views, concerns and expectations for the measures.

The consultations also sought the views and input from other stakeholders critical for implementing the order, such as local government officials (local council officers, district leaders) as well as religious and cultural leaders and civil society groups. The engagements were broadly structured to elicit a wide variety of views not only on the type of measures that would be most appropriate and favoured by the community of victims but also the most appropriate and relevant modalities for delivery of the measures, considering local context and conditions. With respect to the stakeholder engagements, emphasis was placed on securing a 50:50 male-to-female ratio in participation.

⁴ Ongwen, para 57.

⁵ Ongwen, para 57; ICC, Trial Chamber VI, The Prosecutor v. Bosco Ntaganda (Ntaganda), Reparations Order, ICC-01/04-02/06-2659, 8 March 2021, paras 30-98.

IV. VICTIMS OF THE CASE AND HARMS SUFFERED

A. Victims Consulted

Victims consulted were a mix of those who had participated in the Ongwen proceedings and those who had not. Largely, their experiences and harm suffered were similar. Victims met included women, men and the elderly who had suffered from mass violence, torture, attempted murder, enslavement, pillaging, outrages upon personal dignity, destruction of property and cruel and unusual punishment. In particular, many testified to having lost multiple (up to 10 and 15) members of their family in a single attack. In most cases, victims had suffered multiple harms from numerous crimes with long-lasting impact, rendering them especially vulnerable and in need of multiple forms of reparations — including physical, psychological and socio-economic rehabilitation. Due to the fact that the crimes had taken place over two decades earlier, a good number of victims were middle-aged or elderly, physically weak with different chronic conditions and ailments, and not able to provide adequately for themselves. Others were rendered disabled from the acts of violence and torture they suffered, leaving them with limited mobility or ability to engage in farming or other income-generating activities. Others still walk with bullets lodged in their bodies, thus requiring urgent medical interventions and follow-up care. The psychological effects of the crimes on the victims have been long-lasting for some, including PTSD and depression, while still others suffer from serious mental illness requiring specialised drugs only available at designated facilities. Further, the loss of loved ones through extrajudicial killing or disappearance has been compounded by the lack of information about the whereabouts of their family members, causing severe and long-lasting moral harm; many victims expressed a desire for the exhumation of bodies from mass graves and proper burial according to local custom.

Victims of thematic crimes were specially consulted; this group constituted those who had suffered from sexual and gender-based crimes including forced marriage, torture, rape, enslavement and forced pregnancy, as well as forced recruitment of children by the LRA and children born of war. This group continues to suffer from severe and long-lasting effects of the crimes, due to the fact that many were captured at a young age and forced to endure torture and sexual violence over years. This has caused serious injuries impacting their sexual and reproductive health and led to severe trauma. Many women returned with babies as a result and faced social rejection and acute poverty as heads of households with no support. Physical and moral harm was noticeably more severe amongst this group, and all explained how social stigma, exclusion and discrimination have affected their mental health and their ability to reintegrate and recover. In most cases, the victims were not welcome back into their communities as they were seen as associated with the LRA, thus instilling fear in the surrounding community whose members had also been traumatised by the atrocities perpetrated over a period of years. In the case of child soldiers, traditional cleansing ceremonies have helped to facilitate their reintegration, but many still experience mental health issues and difficulty carrying out income-generating activities. Poverty and lack of economic opportunity for this group of young people have contributed to negative coping mechanisms such as alcoholism and substance abuse, with which victim communities are grappling.

Given the widespread nature of the violence, victimhood is widespread across the communities. Whether they had participated in the Ongwen case or not, those consulted acknowledged the fact that they had all suffered in one way or another from the LRA conflict, not just individually but also as a community, whereby the social fabric and cohesion had been destroyed over years of being confined to displacement camps, during which time communities could not carry out their normal lives, cultural practices or traditional economic livelihoods, such as farming.

Though the crimes had taken place over two decades ago, recovery has been slow. An administrative reparations programme to respond to the various forms of harm has yet to be rolled out in the region. Prolonged conflict was characterised by the confinement of the majority of the population in displacement camps, which halted economic growth and social development. Despite state-led development and reconstruction programmes instituted in the region, which have contributed to socio-economic recovery, victims continue to live in poverty with multiple layers of vulnerability due to the crimes they experienced. Further, the crimes took place for the most part in rural and remote areas that are a distance from urban centres where most social services are concentrated, limiting victims' access to such services.

B. Types of Harm Suffered

The Reparations Order confirmed five different types of harm (individual and collective) experienced by the victims in the identified locations. These include physical harm, moral harm, material harm, community harm and transgenerational harm. In the course of the consultations, victims spoke about these harms (see below).

After consideration of the evidence, the Chamber made the finding that entire families and the community of victims of the attacks on the four IDP camps as a whole — tens of thousands of individuals — suffered tremendous harm due to the unimaginable atrocities committed during and in the aftermath of the four attacks for which Mr Ongwen was convicted. Similarly, over one hundred women and girls and thousands of children — boys and girls — under the age of fifteen suffered profound multifaceted harm as a result of being kidnapped. Many were later subject to sexual and gender-based crimes or forced to serve as LRA soldiers, being kept in captivity with cruel methods of physical and psychological coercion. The evidence confirmed that entire communities and families personally experienced the attacks, in which many of their family members, neighbours, friends and others in their community were killed and severely mistreated. Houses were destroyed and burnt, some with their residents still inside; everything else, including all aid food stocks, was looted or destroyed. Some civilians managed to escape the attacks, but most of those who survived were then forced to walk past the bodies scattered through the camps. Civilians were abducted and forced to carry heavy loads of looted goods and injured fighters for long distances, while tied to each other, barefooted. They were mistreated, which forced them to walk faster and prevented them from escaping.

They suffered great physical and psychological abuse during the walk out of the camps. The examples are distressing: some were beaten to death, some were forced to kill other abductees, some children were taken from their mothers if they cried or caused their mothers to slow down, and they were thrown into pits and left to die. When reaching the locations of LRA forces where other abductees had been brought, women and girls were 'distributed' to LRA soldiers who subjected them to sexual and gender-based crimes, and children under the age of 15 were integrated into the LRA forces. Some were kept for years, while others never returned home. As a result, the Chamber concluded that the direct victims of the attacks, direct victims of sexual and gender-based crimes, and children born of those crimes, and former child soldiers suffered serious and long-lasting physical, moral and material harm.

The indirect victims of all of these crimes suffered moral and material harm. In addition, the entire community of victims suffered community harm, and children of direct victims suffered transgenerational harm.

Harms noted during the Consultations

On the question of harm sustained, though a notable time lapse has occurred since the commission of the crimes, many victims who participated in the consultations confirmed the severe and long-lasting effects of the crimes.

Physical Harm

During the consultations, victims indicated examples of the physical harm and its effects for which no reparation had yet been awarded. They include: gunshot wounds; bullet and shrapnel still embedded in the body; burns; amputated or maimed limbs, lips and ears; physical deformities caused by poorly healed wounds; physical paralysis and disabilities caused by torture; chronic body aches and pains; and other chronic illnesses as an effect of torture and abuse.

Moral Harm

Examples of moral or psychosocial harm suffered by victims were described as: mental illness, trauma, recurrent nightmares, depression, suicidal thoughts, alcohol and substance abuse, anxiety about missing family members and relatives, and severe memory loss. Further, many victims still suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which prevents them from reintegrating into society and finding and sustaining a job or livelihood. A number of the victims had yet to receive treatment for this form of harm.

Material Harm

In the consultations, victims shared examples of material harm suffered that had yet to be repaired. This included loss of property, land deprivation, inability to work due to injury, disability or other health conditions, loss of earnings and a reduced standard of living, leading to impoverishment amongst victim communities. The majority of the victims live in abject poverty because they are unable to fend for themselves. This has an impact on the family and the community, another fact which was recognised by the Chamber.

Community Harm

The order also recognised community harm. In the consultations, this was reinforced with findings from the victims who indicated collective harm and its effects in the form of: increased levels of youth delinquency and criminality amongst victims; a diminished ability to participate in normal societal activities and functioning; the loss of knowledge and appreciation for traditional values and belief systems; loss of trust within the community and social harmony, especially amongst the youth; increased levels of gender-based violence in communities; and social rejection of children born in captivity. Another lingering impact of the violations is the social stigma that victims experience in their communities, associated with the types of violations they suffered; in particular, victims of SGBC, children born of war and child soldiers all expressed high levels of stigma in the community that prevented their reintegration and healing.

Transgenerational Harm

The Court recognised transgenerational harm, such as harm affecting subsequent generations. The phenomenon was described as one in which traumatised parents set in motion an intergenerational cycle of dysfunction, handing down trauma to their children, who themselves did not directly experience the atrocities their parents endured, affecting their children's emotional behaviour, attachment and well-being as a result.

Stigma as an emerging issue

One of the cross-cutting issues that emerged during the consultations was the harmful effects of social stigma against the most vulnerable victims, in particular victims of SGBC, children born of war and child soldiers. Due to the nature of the crimes suffered, victims experience high degrees of shame and are the targets of discrimination and social exclusion in their communities. This leads to additional levels of impoverishment, limited access to economic and educational opportunities, and increased levels of psychological and mental health issues including depression, limiting their ability to recover, rehabilitate and reintegrate into their communities. Especially in smaller communities where members know each other well, preserving anonymity and confidentiality about what they experienced is a challenge. The issue of stigma was said to affect the victims individually and collectively, creating divisions and disharmony in the community that victims and local and cultural leaders alike observed with concern.

In light of the multiple layers of harm suffered, the Chamber ultimately ruled that collective community-based reparations focused on rehabilitation and symbolic and satisfaction measures were most appropriate. Rehabilitation measures should be directed at facilitating victims' reintegration into society, taking into account the different impacts crimes have on victims of different genders.

V. SURVIVORS' EXPERIENCES AND EXPECTATIONS FOR REPARATIONS

During the consultations, the TFV team met with victims from the four case locations, as well as particular groups recognised in the Order: women survivors of sexual and gender-based crimes and children affected by the conflict, namely children born of war (sexual violence) and former child soldiers. Despite the fact that the crimes had taken place several years ago, many of the survivors, especially the most vulnerable categories (elderly, SGBC survivors, children born of war), related the long-lasting effects on their physical and mental health, which confirms their urgent need for reparations, in particular medical and psychosocial measures. Further, victim accounts during the consultations indicated that the long-lasting effects of torture or untreated physical injuries (bullet wounds) continue to make everyday life a challenge, rendering socio-economic recovery and reintegration slow and difficult.

Despite these conditions, many indicated that they had not yet received a formal apology, acknowledgement of the harms suffered or any form of reparation from the government. This situation has led to a piecemeal approach whereby non-governmental organisations and service providers have stepped in to fill the gap. Accordingly, some victims had indicated benefitting from limited social support in the aftermath of the conflict, including medical and psychosocial assistance or socio-economic and livelihoods support, while others had not. This is the current context which has led to an overall enthusiastic response to the Ongwen Order and high expectations to receive meaningful and timely reparations by victims who have been waiting for years for a form of recognition and repair of the harms suffered in the conflict.

Survivors related a wide variety of experiences and the impact of the harm they suffered, as well as their expectations for reparations, when asked about the modality for making monetary payments, the most adequate forms of collective community-based rehabilitation measures, and their expectations for symbolic and satisfaction measures.

A. Individual Symbolic Payments

Background

The Chamber ordered a symbolic payment in recognition of the harm suffered in the amount of EUR 750 per eligible victim, in addition to the other collective measures. To develop the implementation plan, the TFV needed to know the best-suited modalities for implementing the order and to gather proposals from victims on the most adequate forms of collective measures that will respond to their needs (rehabilitation and satisfaction). During the consultations, it therefore sought to assess victims' views on the payment, understanding that victims will have varying conditions and preferences regarding the delivery of measures as well as their appreciation of the measures. The TFV also needed to understand the preferences of victims for receiving individual symbolic payments, taking into consideration the contextual and demographic variations and preferences according to gender, location, age group and type of crime.

View of victims

Victims were informed about the symbolic monetary payment and asked about how this would impact their lives and what modalities would be best suited to receive these payments.

The symbolic monetary payment of **EUR 750** was very positively welcomed by all victims in the meetings and garnered the most interactive discussions. Women in particular were enthusiastic and clear about how these payments would transform their lives. Many had clear plans on how they intended to use these funds to establish businesses, construct a home or buy a plot of land, which would materially help them to be more economically stable. Others shared innovative ideas such as pooling their awards to buy farming equipment that would serve a group of victims wishing to engage in farming and where the individual payments limited them from making large purchases.

Victims expressed a preference to receive their payments in Ugandan Shillings (UGX), and the following three methods of distributing the cash payments were suggested: (1) cash-in-hand payments; (2) mobile money transfers; (3) bank account deposits. These suggestions generated lively discussions, with victims expressing their preferences and advantages for some and pointing out weaknesses associated with the other methods. The following arguments were advanced repeatedly across most of the locations, for and against each of the methods of payment.

1. Cash-in-hand payments	
Those in favour of this method cited the following reasons:	Those not in favour of this method cited the following reasons:
• Convenience with little logistical requirements to receive the payment • No additional fees/charges with this method. • Certainty of the amount, as one can verify the amount on-site at time of payment. • Immediate access as the money will be available for immediate use. • It can work for all categories of victims.	• Security and safety risks to both the TFV team delivering the cash payments to the victims and the victims receiving their payments, due to reports that violent criminality and robberies are common in these communities. • Cash-in-hand payments require physical contact with each victim, which will not be possible given the very high number of victims and the limited personnel of the TFV. • There is a high risk of large amounts of cash causing social conflicts and potentially violence in households, between those receiving and others within the household or community.
In sum, this method of payment was often dismissed as impractical by the victims, especially women, after discussing the pros and cons vis-à-vis the other payment options.	

2. Mobile money transfers

This was a very popular option among victims. Arguments in favour included:

- Accessibility to the majority of victims, as many possess mobile phones.
- Safe, secure and confidential, since only the individual victim will know that they have received their payment.
- Availability of cash withdrawal points in most if not all communities at their respective urban and trading centres.
- The cost for receiving the funds is relatively low.
- It is a common and familiar method already in use by many people in these communities, including victims.
- It provides more flexibility than other methods, as the recipient can collect the cash at their convenience.

Arguments against mobile money payments included:

- Most elderly and vulnerable victims do not have mobile phones, and some who have them cannot operate the mobile money functions due to illiteracy.
- Many people with mobile phones do not have them registered in their own names.
- Some victims do not have National Identity (ID) cards, which is a requirement to obtain a mobile phone number in one's name.
- Most of the mobile money agents in the remote communities where victims are predominantly located do not have enough cash capital to serve a number of people potentially looking to withdraw large amounts of cash on any given day.
- Mobile money fraud is very rampant and many people have been defrauded of their finances through the mobile money application.
- Very high costs are attached to mobile money transactions compared to the other two methods.
- Many people worry about their inability to remember their mobile money PINs, without which money cannot be accessed.

Based on discussions of the advantages and disadvantages of this method of payment, mobile money transfer remained the most popular choice amongst the three options.

3. Bank transfers

The reasons for preferring bank deposits included:

- Safe and secure — bank deposits are less susceptible to theft and robberies.
- Lower bank fees for deposits and withdrawals in comparison to mobile money transactions.
- It allows for better planning before one withdraws their money.

Arguments against the bank deposits included:

- Bank branches are not located in the areas where the highest concentration of victims reside.
- Many victims do not have bank accounts.
- Many people do not have national ID cards required to open bank accounts in their names.
- Bank charges are high, and many also require opening balances, which many may not have.
- A number of victims are illiterate, and some are quite vulnerable and are not able to operate bank accounts.
- Accessing banks requires transport, which many do not have and also lack the money to pay for.
- There is usually fraud committed around banks and there is a risk of one losing their money to fraudsters around bank vicinities.

4. Trend variations

Trend variation per gender

Across all, if not most, of the communities, the women gravitated away from cash-in-hand payments towards mobile money transfers and bank account deposits. In some locations, the women themselves outrightly recommended mobile money payments and bank deposits without considering the cash-in-hand option. There were only a few extremely vulnerable victims (very elderly, usually with reduced mobility, and some elderly women who worried about not getting to the bank alone) who insisted on cash-in-hand payments for purposes of accessibility.

While they initially exhibited reluctance to mobile money transfers and bank deposits, after lengthy discussions and in-depth analysis of the three options, the men also selected bank deposits and mobile money transfers as the most appropriate methods to receive payments, with restricted possibilities for cash-in-hand payments for those who will be assessed and found to be suitable only for cash. Another observation emerging from the discussions with victims is that female victims appeared to regard this award with a deep sense of purpose and solemnity. They appeared to have a better grasp of the meaning behind these payments; albeit symbolic, they saw them as a symbol of recognition of their suffering, and therefore felt the need to put this award to good and sustainable use.

“Making Visible the Plight of Victims of crimes against humanity and war crimes in northern Uganda”

Outcomes of the 2024 Consultations on the ICC Ongwen Reparations Order conducted by the ICC Trust Fund for Victims with Victims in Northern Uganda

Trend variation per location

Most of the locations where the victims were consulted preferred the two payment methods above, with a possibility for cash-in-hand in particular situations where this would be requested and deemed most convenient or beneficial to the recipient due to their unique conditions. In particular, very elderly people expressed the challenge of mobility and general health problems including blindness and/or paralysis which confined them to their homes. Variations from the above trends were found in Lukodi, where the women particularly did not agree with mobile banking and bank agents moving there to serve them in-situ. They argued that this would still expose their transactions in the public sphere and expose them to security and safety threats of theft and robbery. As Lukodi is close to Gulu city, they preferred the option to collect payments from Gulu city where they could enjoy more confidentiality and security when receiving payments. Similarly, in some parishes east of Pajule township, the preference was to access payments from pre-established payment points in Pader town not far away.

Trend variation per age group

No significant variations were marked across the age brackets in the preferred payment method. Some cited previous experience of receiving payments under a separate government programme called the Parish Development Model (PDM), in which every beneficiary received their money through bank accounts, thus the methods did not pose an obvious challenge. As stated above, there appeared to remain good cause for a few extremely vulnerable victims with unique needs who could still benefit from receiving their payments in cash.

Trend variation based on type of crime

There were no marked differences between the preferred methods of payment based on the victims' exposure to crimes.

Summary of views

Amongst the three modes of payment, the majority of victims who participated in the consultations preferred the use of bank transfers and mobile money transfers to cash payments, for reasons of security, confidentiality and convenience. Generally, cash-in-hand payments were not favoured by the majority of victims; in part, this method was believed to be most susceptible to possible corruption, lack of confidentiality and to be less secure. They advised that the two options should be left open for each victim to select which is more convenient and practical given their individual situations and preferences. Importantly, it was also noted that bank deposits or mobile money transfers may not be ideal in certain cases, perhaps with respect to more vulnerable victims with very unique needs and special circumstances. In such cases, there should be an option for such victims to receive cash payments in hand or to ensure assistance through trusted family members or community leaders, if identified as such.

Respondents also recommended that the issuance of the symbolic payment be accompanied by the offering of financial literacy training or a similar financial planning course. Many victims indicated that providing recipients with training to improve individual financial management, planning, budgeting and safeguarding of their resources would be very beneficial. Many respondents spoke of their experience with initiatives such as village savings and loans associations (VSLA) or the Parish Development Model (PDM) trainings that enabled them to better manage, plan and budget their money as well as spending and small investing. Respondents recommended that recipients of the symbolic payment who have not benefited from such trainings and initiatives be afforded that opportunity to enable them to better utilise and safeguard the money they receive.

B. Collective Community-based Rehabilitation measures

With respect to collective community-based rehabilitation measures, victims were asked about what specific measures and programmes would be most adequate and responsive to their needs. The session also served to confirm the ongoing and urgent need for rehabilitation measures despite the time lapse between the incidents and their current situation. The discussions were divided into three sub-topics to gather proposals on (1) physical rehabilitation measures; (2) psychosocial rehabilitation measures; and (3) socio-economic rehabilitation measures.

1. Physical Rehabilitation

Victims suffered a variety of physical injuries and ailments due to the crimes committed, calling for collective measures of physical rehabilitation. Several harms identified were said to require urgent medical treatment and rehabilitation. These included cases of bullet wounds and other shrapnel still embedded in the bodies of the victims, severe body pain, paralysis and disabilities, as well as chronic medical conditions, especially among female victims of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).

The following interventions were suggested by the victims:

- Organise periodic medical camps where victims can be seen by specialists and receive specialised assessments and treatments, and referrals as necessary.
- Provide support to local health facilities with equipment, qualified personnel and medicines where victims can be treated or referred, as may be determined. These may also include referrals for other procedures that may require better-equipped facilities, or may include provision of prosthetics, operations and corrective surgeries.
- Set up systems where victims living with lifelong conditions receive their medical supplies and attention on a routine basis at available health facilities.
- Provision of physiotherapy treatment, especially in health facilities around the four sites of attack, where the majority of victims are found.
- Provide registered victims with a form of identification card to be used to access free medical support.



Eleven members from Acoli, Lango, Teso, and West Nile regions, elected as Victim Participation Committee members representing the larger Thematic Crimes group.

On the modalities of receiving such treatment, many victims preferred on-site treatment in their localities where possible, as many of them do not have family to assist them to reach distant facilities. However, this preference was not shared by some SGBV victims from the Lango sub-region, who cited stigma even in health units from health workers within their communities.

Many of the case locations where the majority of victims reside do have government health centres, specifically in Pajule. However, most of these health facilities have limited capacity to address the needs of these victims, who often have more complex needs due to the nature of the violations and the prolonged period of neglect in treating the harm. They provide a good foundation upon which to build and develop better-equipped and resourced centres capable of handling the medical needs of the victims.

In Pajule sub-county, the victims raised one notable observation: even where a government Health Centre IV exists, many victims expressed a preference to access services through the existing Catholic Mission health facility in the area instead, citing concerns about poor treatment, lack of access to medicines, corruption and mismanagement of cases at the Health Centre IV.

Another observation on the question of rehabilitation centres: even if most of the areas have government health facilities, there may still be a challenge regarding some victims who are more remote across northern Uganda. To adequately reach these victims, a mapping of their distribution pattern across the region could help to identify major government or private health facilities that can be used as their points of first contact.

2. Psychosocial Rehabilitation

Psychosocial rehabilitation features as one of the reparative measures in the order, to respond to the widespread levels of mental suffering and trauma resulting from the seriousness of the crimes committed over time, affecting large populations of victims in the Ongwen case. The community consultations confirmed that victims continued to suffer from mental suffering, trauma and various forms of mental illness. These were said to be due to unresolved trauma, social stigma and social rejection by their own communities, lack of employment and livelihoods leading to impoverishment, and the lack of adequate support services for individuals, families and communities, among others.

Several measures were suggested to respond to these persistent problems:

- Carry out community awareness campaigns against social stigma;

- Launch a sports and recreational programme to engage victims in constructive and healthy activities that can contribute to their mental wellbeing, rehabilitation and reintegration;

- Design programmes for elders to train and mentor youth in traditional cultural practices, such as dances and traditional values, which contribute to restoring the social fabric in society, healing and social cohesion and harmony;

- Incorporate victims into community group rehabilitation and recreational programmes to enhance positive social interactions and cooperation;



Community members from Lapul attending a consultative meeting organised by the TFFV in their community to discuss the reparations measure.

- **Provide psychological and mental health treatment for severe cases of trauma and PTSD;**

- **Provide victims with economic and livelihood opportunities to lift the economic burden that causes significant anxiety and stress;**

- **Provide counselling services targeting individuals, households and communities; these counselling services should also focus on the formerly abducted persons to help them overcome feelings of shame, rage and bitterness that may sometimes lead to antisocial behaviour and violence;**

- **Launch radio programming to provide information and create awareness on the causes, consequences and symptoms of mental illness, trauma and depression, to empower victims to gain knowledge and seek assistance in their communities;**

- **Make counselling services available, both through civil society organisations and in health facilities, to make these services widely accessible;**

- **Train and coach leading members of the community such as religious leaders, local council officials, women's groups, VSLA groups, cultural leaders and schools to better provide counselling services, both individually and collectively.**

One of the elements that impacts victimhood, recovery and reintegration into society is the existence of widespread stigma and social exclusion that victims confront daily. It is a problem that has continued to afflict the lives of many victims, particularly victims of SGBV, former child soldiers and children born of war. Many young women who gave birth while in LRA captivity have had their children rejected by their families who label these children as offspring of the rebels. Due to the stigma and social rejection, these women have chosen to leave their ancestral homes to which they had hoped to return and settle. Instead, they have had to rebuild their lives on their own, often in very difficult socio-economic conditions with no family support or state or social support structures.



Victim Participation Committee members of Abok community following their elections by the victim population.

In most cases, these young women have not had the benefit of attending school due to the conflict, have no place to call home, and have no material possessions or access to land. Besides growing up impoverished, children born in captivity continue to face stigma in society and in schools. The problem appears to be even more acute in areas far from the case locations where most of the victims are located. In the past, the problem of female victims being rejected by their families was a matter that would have been mediated and resolved by cultural leaders in the Acholi and Lango sub-regions, but these structures have never recovered to their full strength since the mass displacement caused by the conflict.

Stigma also seems to be exacerbated by experiences of deep trauma that continue to prevent victims from reintegrating into society, leading to social exclusion and isolation. For example, suicidal tendencies were also reported in many meetings; these cases were specifically reported by parents whose children had returned from captivity. Sometimes the returnees have had to relocate to new places and many people did not know where they had moved to, due to either stigma or mental illness. It was also noted that some victims can utilise their experience during the conflict to exploit situations and create fear in order to gain certain advantages in society. In responding to stigma, widespread counselling of victims was seen to be an important strategy to improve their overall recovery and reintegration into their communities.

In response to this issue, a number of suggestions were made to address the individual and collective effects of stigma lingering in the communities. One innovative example proposed by the religious leaders to challenge social stigma in the community was to highlight successful cases of survivors who have overcome stigma and are active members of their community, who could serve as role models and act as inspirational leaders in their community in challenging stigma and supporting others to overcome discrimination and exclusion.

Other proposals to address stigma and social exclusion included:

- Offer counselling services for the victims and/or refer serious cases of mental illness to specialised institutions for adequate care;

- Build the capacities of cultural leaders, especially clan leaders, to address stigma at the community level;

- Include victims in group activities together with other members of their communities to promote social reintegration and harmony;

- Organise support groups that can hold exchange visits and dialogues amongst victims in different locations to support mental health, wellness and solidarity;

- Empower church leaders and educational institutions with knowledge, skills and tools to fight stigma in society;

- Launch anti-stigmatisation and social inclusion campaigns in schools;

- Radio programming to sensitise the public;

- Provide police and local government training on confronting and eradicating stigma;

- Enact local laws and community frameworks to monitor and control stigma and bias against victims based on their past experiences;

- Launch a public awareness campaign to combat stigma and promote social inclusion.

3. Socio-economic Rehabilitation

Socio-economic rehabilitation is understood as measures to redress individual and collective harm that have impacted victim communities socially and economically. Some such effects of the war were summed up by the victims as: the loss of economic and educational opportunities; unemployment due to the lack of practical and livelihood skills; impoverishment of victim communities due to physical and mental health effects of the crimes suffered and the collective socio-economic effects of the war; and social and economic exclusion and impoverishment of marginalised groups, such as children born of war and former child soldiers.

Under the livelihood and economic rehabilitation initiatives discussed, vocational skills building and training was a popular option amongst victim communities. This was highly valued by the youth in particular, who were deprived of opportunities to pursue formal education or access other practical skills during the conflict. This interest was equally expressed by the older generation, who felt that vocational training would be more practical and more immediately responsive to their needs.

While most of the victims possess a basic level of literacy (the ability to read and write), not all the victims had benefited from access to formal education. It was suggested by the victims consulted that the skills training should be varied and diverse to accommodate and benefit victims with varying interests, as well as literacy and capacity levels. Other activities suggested included direct hands-on skills such as arts and crafts (jewellery making, bag and basket making and pottery).



Youth members of Lukodi actively elect a male representative to voice their interest and promote participation within their community.

The following vocational skills were recommended by the victims consulted: brick making and laying; tailoring; food catering and baking; hospitality and hotel management; driving and auto repairs. Others requested training in weaving, pottery and other craft making; ICT skills training; electrical installation and electronics repairs; motorcycle repairs; carpentry and woodwork; metal welding; and cosmetology.

These suggestions were offered largely based on previous experiences of victims who had been exposed to varying degrees of vocational training by NGOs working in the area during the post-conflict period. Given that such programmes had been carried out in the past, it would be important to consult with service providers on the achievements and lessons learned from these previous interventions so as to build on these experiences and bolster the sustainability element in the programming going forward.

Alternatively, it was also proposed that a targeted literacy programme could be offered to victims wishing to gain basic literacy skills to increase their employability in different sectors.

Another suggestion made was the proposal to support local income-generation activities to enable economic empowerment, recovery, financial independence and sustainability.



Community members of Odek gather to elect representatives who will serve as liaisons, facilitating two-way communication between the community and the Trust Fund for Victims.

Suggestions emerging from the consultations included:

- Training in commercial agricultural farming for greater productivity and income generation;

- Provision of oxen and ox-ploughs for farming;

- Provision of improved seed varieties for greater agricultural resilience and productivity;

- Provision of enhanced support to existing Village Saving and Loan Association (VSLA) groups with financial literacy and management skills training. It was noted that many of the VSLA groups were equipped with start-up basic training when they were first constituted but that follow-up, advanced training was needed to further enhance their capacity and sustainability. VSLA groups are notably more popular and successful with female members of the community, constituting a viable and promising avenue for income generation and livelihood support;

- In addition to training and skills building, it was recommended that the VSLA groups be provided with modest seed capital, which is currently lacking and which would be critical for the success of the scheme;

Animal rearing (goats, pigs);

Dairy and Poultry farming;

Soap making;

Bakery;

Auto repairs;

Gardening & agricultural farming;

Tree planting and forestry;

Enhancing economic market opportunities (e.g.: training in post-harvest handling of farm produce; small business startups).



Community members of Abok gather in unity at a local church to share their views and be consulted on an important reparations initiative.

In Abok, some youths indicated they had received basic skills training in soap-making and tailoring and are running workshops within the trading centre. These workshops could be enhanced to enable more youths to benefit from apprenticeship trainings.

Finally, a popular recommendation emerging from the consultations with youth is the need for a targeted family planning public awareness campaign, in response to the growing number of unplanned pregnancies amongst the youth who are ill-equipped to handle the social and economic responsibilities that come with this.

4. Trend Variations

Trend variation per gender

Overall, female victims appeared to be better off economically in comparison to their male counterparts. Though women tend to be more vulnerable, having been disowned by their families and rejected by their communities due to their perceived association with the rebels, most of the women consulted had become active members of VSLA groups and reported positive results from their participation. This included establishing financial independence and fostering economic agency through setting up and running a small business, fostering a practice of savings for financial independence and sustainability, receiving financial support for emergency needs (medical) and emotional support and organisational planning.



Members elected from Lapul community, committed to a three-year term, advocating for their community's concerns.

This was less the case for male victims. It was reported that many of them have not performed as successfully as the women in the VSLA groups, due to several reasons. For example, one male victim from Pajule testified that most men depend on farming as their source of income, and with only one proper farming season per year in northern Uganda, men's productivity is focused around the harvest season, leaving them with fewer income-generating activities in other periods. This is unlike the women who usually maintain small income-generating activities throughout the year, such as running small shops, baking, cooking and selling goods. It was noted that one of the elements that affects this imbalance is the fact that in Acholi culture, there is a strong bias against men doing certain kinds of commercial activities that are seen to be fit only for women. Given that men are predominantly involved in farming, which affects their income-generating schedule, this situation disadvantages men from meeting the VSLA requirements, which require steady savings and regular contributions.

With respect to stigma in society, women and girl survivors of SGBV face greater degrees of social stigma and rejection, in particular those who gave birth to children whilst in LRA captivity. This affects the degree of socio-economic recovery and reintegration in the post-conflict setting.

Trend variation per location

Some observations and variations per location emerged. It was noted that in Odek sub-county and in Pajule and Lapul, for those with access to land and no physical impediment to work, receiving support towards agricultural activities was strongly recommended, as victims repeatedly and firmly stated that "we are farmers." In addition, in Pajule and Lapul, it was repeatedly recommended that a previously existing youth training institute operated by the Catholic Mission (Min Ogaba) should be refurbished and used for vocational skills training.

Trend variation per age group

For the most part, younger victims expressed a preference to receive vocational skills training in various employable disciplines, to build their capacity and employability. In contrast, the more mature victims expressed interest in receiving support with pre-existing economic activities they are undertaking. For example, youths would prefer skills-building programmes in hairdressing, cosmetology or electrical installations with start-up support upon completion of the training, while older male victims would prefer receiving equipment and materials to enhance their farming and related commercial activities such as oxen and ox-ploughs, improved seeds and market linkages. Notably, most of the youth were not reportedly participating in VSLA groups within their localities. The situation was even more pronounced among male youth victims. One of the reasons for this may be linked to statements made by youth indicating that if their capacity and employability was enhanced, they would have a continuous flow of income that would allow them to participate in VSLAs and this way they could acquire additional resources such as animals that they could hire out as Oxen, build on their businesses, be able to marry and pay dowry, and be able to support their families and older relatives.



A large group of Lukodi community members gather to participate in discussions and the election of a representative who will lead efforts on implementing reparations within their community.

Trend variation based on type of crime

Victims who were subjected to abductions and held captive by the rebels for long periods of time suffer deep psychological harm due to the seriousness of the crimes they suffered, the loss of opportunities while in captivity, and the multiple and long-term effects of systematic and prolonged abuse they experienced, on their health and well-being. The physical and psychosocial effects of the crimes have further disadvantaged victims from enjoying complete and successful reintegration into their families and their communities.

In particular, children who were abducted and forced to fight with the rebels as well as young women who returned with children from captivity have faced additional barriers to their socio-economic reintegration in their communities. On this point, some victims suggested the need for the provision of psychosocial support services to accompany any socio-economic rehabilitation measures to ensure that victims with these needs are better prepared to receive and efficiently manage the individual payments mandated by the reparations order.



Victim community of Pajule gather for a consultation meeting organised by the TFV to discuss the Reparations order and its potential impact on their community.

C. Collective Symbolic and Satisfaction Measures

Victims were asked about the forms of collective symbolic and satisfaction measures that would be most appropriate given the type of harm they experienced and the impact this has had on their lives and community.

1. Cleansing ceremonies, exhumations & reburials, memorials and monuments

Cleansing ceremonies

Several pertinent issues were raised during the consultations that relate to collective cultural, spiritual and societal suffering which are deeply linked to traditional customs, practices and beliefs associated with the deceased and the gruesomeness of the atrocities committed. During the rebel attacks on civilians, hundreds of people were killed in the most inhumane manner, calling for certain cleansing ceremonies in traditional Acholi culture that were not performed due to the conflict, insecurity or lack of means to complete these ceremonies.

B. The Role of Religious Leaders

Representatives from the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI) took part in the consultations, where a total of 18 leaders (8 women) and victims participated. They represented all the case locations, as well as Gulu city and other areas of the Acholi sub-region. As with the other stakeholder groups, the topics of discussion surrounded providing an explanation of the Reparations Order and receiving views and suggestions on the role of religious leaders in facilitating the implementation of the order.

During the consultations, religious leaders were repeatedly cited by victims as playing an important role in promoting psychosocial rehabilitation and recovery amongst communities. For this reason, they emphasised the instrumental role religious leaders could play in facilitating the component of the reparations order pertaining to psychosocial rehabilitation and community healing. This view is grounded in a long-established active role religious leaders have played in fostering peace and reconciliation in northern Uganda. To date, religious institutions have served a key role in promoting spiritual healing for the communities, including victims in the case. Churches and mosques have offered counselling services both for individuals and groups.

The victims also felt that religious institutions could play a key role in the implementation of the third component of the reparations order, the delivery of symbolic and satisfaction measures to the communities. Religious leaders have an established practice of leading memorial prayers in the four case locations to mark the anniversaries of the attacks. They have played a pivotal role in the collective healing of the communities and have promoted messages of forgiveness, reconciliation and healing. Key religious leaders from the Anglican Church Diocese, the Roman Catholic Diocese and the Acholi Muslim District have been at the centre of these memorial events.

In response to the presentation by the TFV on the Ongwen Order, the religious leaders welcomed a more engaged role in their communities and were open to the proposals made by the victims. They acknowledged the fact that victims continue to struggle with recovery and reintegration due to social stigma and exclusion, especially for the children born of war.

On this point, the Archbishop Emeritus of the Diocese of Gulu, John Baptiste Odama highlighted the problem of stigma, noting:

“

We now have two tribes of Acholi. Those who were not abducted and who consider themselves to be the authentic Acholi, and those who were either abducted and returned from captivity or were born in captivity – who are rejected by their maternal relatives!

”

He described this as a problem requiring urgent attention and intervention, noting that even if the reparations order is limited to the victims in the Dominic Ongwen case, it provides an important opportunity to advocate for broader reparations measures to benefit the wider group of victims affected by the war.

According to the victims in the four localities, due to the gruesome nature of the crimes (family members forced to murder each other, victims forced to eat human flesh, rape by the rebels), the individuals who committed or were subjected to these crimes should undergo ceremonial cleansing to allow for proper social reintegration and individual healing. Without this, victims reported a number of collective consequences, both psychological and social, including persistent nightmares, mental illness, poor health and mysterious sightings, contributing to a deeply wounded society.

Exhumation & reburial

Linked to the importance of the cleansing ceremonies for the survivors of atrocities, traditional cultural beliefs and practices surrounding death and last funeral rites are sacred in Acholi culture. The fact that so many victims were murdered and clandestinely buried without being afforded their last funeral rites and a proper burial deprives the family members from meeting an important cultural and religious obligation. Local communities believe that without performing these last funeral rites, the spirit of the deceased is not at peace and the peace and harmony within the family and community are also affected. The need to search for the missing, conduct exhumations and proper burials was highlighted across the four locations by the victims consulted as an important form of satisfaction for the harm suffered.

Memorial prayers

Holding annual memorial prayers also featured strongly amongst the satisfaction measures recommended by the victim communities. For several years following the attacks, collective memorial prayers were held in all the attack sites with the support of local NGOs, but this was not maintained in Pajule and Odek due to the lack of funds available and the diminished capacity and commitment of the victims to organise these events.

In contrast, Abok and Lukodi localities have managed to maintain their memorial events due to more robust victim-led mobilisation. In all four locations, victims expressed strong support for the annual commemorative prayers and stressed their important role for community healing, reconciliation and peace-building.

Commemorative monuments

In an effort to commemorate the attacks and in honour of the deceased, all of the communities of the four case locations have constructed monuments in their memory. In most cases the monuments are built on or near the site of the memorialised attack. With support from select civil society organisations, the communities organise annual commemorative events and have a small memory centre. All four locations recommended the construction of bigger and better monuments at the attack sites in memory of the attack, the victims and the dead. Many recommended that the monument should be inscribed with the names of those who died in the attack, and a short description of the events of the attack.

The following recommendations for collective community healing measures were suggested:

Cultural activities

Support cultural (clan) leaders and victims' families to conduct cleansing ceremonies where they are needed. This excludes Lukodi, where the victims reported that cleansing ceremonies were already conducted and concluded some years ago.

Conduct exhumations and reburials of the deceased buried in either mass graves or on land that is not family-owned. This was emphasised in Abok sub-county, where exhumation and reburial of roughly 28 people is said to be outstanding.

Create forums where cultural leaders are supported to provide mentorship and guidance to the youth on Acholi traditional values and cultural practices.

Support clan leaders to trace missing persons who were abducted and remain unaccounted for.

Religious activities

Provide support for the logistical and financial organisation of annual memorial prayers in honour of the victims of the respective attacks in all four case locations. The victims stated that if supported for two or three years, their structures shall have formed better, and they will be able to independently lead and sustain the memorial events.

Educate and mobilise religious leaders to actively promote peaceful co-existence, social tolerance and harmony, to foster community reconciliation and peace-building and to discourage the repetition of violent crime.

Support initiatives (special prayers and religious counselling) for victims who believe that their cleansing is best done through organised and formal religious practices.

Other Community activities

Community centres: All four locations recommended that a community hall be established to host victim-led and victim-centred activities, such as recreational activities and workshops. These centres could also serve as a museum or space where artefacts and items could be displayed to document and honour the victims of the attacks and educate the public on the history of the community. They suggested that the centre could also be hired out to host other community or private activities, where the proceeds could be used towards supporting the annual commemorative prayers.

Museums: Victims highly recommended that museums should be established where items and records of the attacks would be secured and preserved to act as historical sites to educate future generations about the history of each locality. The museums would promote awareness of the events that took place and act as a reminder and deterrent in the future. Only Lukodi has a modest museum that can be further enhanced. In contrast, victims of thematic crimes, especially women, recommended that one central museum could be established in Gulu city to reflect the history in the sub-region and document the various attacks and experiences of the victim communities.

Documentation: Victims emphasised the importance of publishing books to document the attacks in accessible formats and memorialise the experiences of victims. SGBV survivors in particular stressed the importance of documentation for them and future generations.

Redouble community programmes with support and participation of local councils, clan leaders and the police to address stigma and social exclusion by certain groups of victims, particularly those who are vulnerable and susceptible (children born of rape, child soldiers, single mothers and SGBC survivors returning from captivity).

Enriching traditional cultural values and practices: Victims stressed the need to enhance and restore cultural values and practices that had been weakened due to years of conflict. They suggested that communities should be supported with items such as drums, uniforms and other equipment to engage in traditional recreational activities such as traditional dances, and also to sponsor forums where elders mentor the youth on culturally important skills such as cooking traditional foods and other values that are important to preserving and enhancing cultural traditions integral to the local communities.

Organise exchange visits among victims' communities to share common experiences and foster community healing and psychosocial support and recovery.

5. Apology

Apology constitutes an important measure of satisfaction that can foster victim healing and restore victims' dignity in the aftermath of violent conflict and the commission of mass crimes. Victims were asked about their expectations for an apology by Ongwen and by the Government of Uganda.

On the question of whether victims felt that an apology from Dominic Ongwen should be included in the reparations measures to foster healing and recovery, a sharp contrast emerged between the responses of the male and female victims. Ultimately, most of the male victims stated that an Ongwen apology would be appropriate and recommended only after all the reparations measures have been delivered, and after Ongwen has completed serving the full length of his prison sentence.

Few maintained that if he apologises and seeks forgiveness he should be forgiven, based on religious principles. In contrast, most of the female victims had quite negative and emotional reactions to the possibility of an Ongwen apology. Many of them raised the following questions:

- How can we forgive him when we are still living with the legacies of his crimes?
- How can Ongwen ask for forgiveness when some of the children he abducted have not returned home to this day?
- If Ongwen wants to be forgiven, it must be reflected in his actions. As we speak, he is appealing against the Reparations Order, yet he is not even the one paying for the reparations. His actions do not reflect remorse.
- We expected Ongwen to receive the death penalty. He was lucky to be sentenced to only 25 years in prison.
- We do not expect an apology from him.
- Ongwen showed us no mercy when we were in captivity under his command. It is very difficult to forgive him now.

In contrast, most of the youth consulted in the Gulu town meeting demonstrated positive responses to the question of Ongwen's possible apology, while others seemed uninterested and detached from the discussions. For those who expressed opinions on the matter, a clear majority supported a formal apology from Ongwen.

A minority view supported a formal apology on the understanding that he himself was abducted and coerced to commit those heinous crimes, thus placing a responsibility on the government to apologise for failing to protect him from abduction in the first place. Still other victims from Abok expressed the need for a government apology for failing in its responsibility to protect those who were abducted and forced to join the fighting.

Finally, when victims were informed that an apology could potentially lead to a reduction in Ongwen's imprisonment time, many more respondents tended to reject the idea of an apology.

On the issue of apology from the Government of Uganda, victims expressed strong sentiments and anger, noting that the government has never reached out to their communities to apologise and acknowledge their suffering from the numerous attacks on IDP camps to which the government forcefully drove them. In sum, victims unanimously felt that the Government should make a public apology on the basis of its involvement and neglect leading to widespread violations against the civilian population.

In particular, they pointed to the role of government in forcing civilians to be confined to IDP camps; the lack of responsiveness of government forces to protect IDP camps; and the presence of army barracks inside the camp as a cause of attack on the camp by the rebels. Overall, they felt that an apology from the government would help them in their healing process.

6. Trend Variations

Trend variation per gender

On the issue of apology, responses from men and women were at odds. Male victims were generally more open to an apology by Ongwen; however, female victims largely disagreed with the proposal. Women saw the act of apology as 'disrespectful' in light of the serious suffering they have endured. Victims of cross-generational harm (children born of war) showed more openness towards an apology, acknowledging in certain cases that Ongwen was also a victim of abduction. However, there was consensus amongst the victims that if an Ongwen apology were to come, it should only be made at the end after all the reparations measures have been delivered. On the issue of cleansing ceremonies, victims of SGBC had mixed feelings, though a majority suggested that traditional cleansing and healing ceremonies remain very important for their healing; others said that they have tried counselling and prayers but have not found lasting peace. They indicated that what they experienced would need traditional healers to first perform traditional cleansing ceremonies.

Trend variation per location

Memorial prayers were considered important across all locations, though some are being conducted with more regularity than others. As to traditional cleansing and healing ceremonies, the communities in Lukodi did not express interest in such ceremonies due to the strong Christian presence of the Anglican Church in the area.

Trend variation per age group

The older and elderly victims tended to favour the cultural initiatives in comparison to the younger ones, who mostly preferred more formal religious approaches to social rehabilitation measures.

Trend variation based on type of crime

There were no marked variations based on this category.

A. The Role of Local Council Officers

On 16 July 2024, a total of 31 Local Council One (LC1) Chairpersons and/or Vice Chairpersons, and 5 Local Council Three (LCIII) Chairpersons were consulted on their role in the community and in facilitating the implementation process. The participating LC1 members represented each of the parishes within the four sub-counties corresponding to the case locations in the Ongwen case, while the 5 LCIII Chairpersons represented Abok, Odek, Lukodi, Pajule and Lapul sub-counties, where a majority of victims eligible for reparations reside. Overall, the local councillors validated the submissions of the victims and their communities as highlighted above.

On the issue of implementation, they raised the question of available funding for the reparations programme and how this would affect the rate of implementation. While this was noted as a real challenge, the TFV team indicated that fundraising for implementation of the Order had commenced and that the Order could be implemented progressively with available funding and by focusing on addressing the dire needs of the most vulnerable victims first.

On the matter of symbolic payment amounts, it was clarified that payment amounts are not adjustable and must be issued in the amount specified in the Order. Also on the issue of payments, the local leaders alerted the TFV team to the susceptibility of the payment delivery to the infiltration of fraudsters and criminals in the community and therefore recommended payment through bank transfers as the most appropriate option. The TFV team also assured participants that the administrative cost of opening a bank account would be assumed by the TFV, where necessary. A final point made by the members was a recommendation that additional research be done to select the best banks to partner with regarding the payment delivery modalities for the best interest of the beneficiaries. Regarding the question about victims who are due reparations and who have passed away, it was clarified that the VPRS together with the TFV will verify and ensure next of kin become secondary beneficiaries. Another suggestion made on modalities of implementation was that livelihood support be administered alongside symbolic payments.

Regarding victim registration, members highlighted the need for coordination and cooperation with the TFV to properly engage communities, and called for flexibility in terms of the time factor to ensure registration is feasible within the Court's timeframe. In terms of process, it was also suggested to start the process with 'participating' victims in the case and then expand measures to other eligible victims for reparations. On the matter of engaging victim communities, members indicated the need to be adequately informed on the process of victim identification and registration and requested training to address stigma in the communities. They requested specific guidance and tools on how to handle this aspect. Another area of training requested by the participants was in the area of capacity building to handle and facilitate implementation of the mental rehabilitation of victims.

The participants also highlighted the need to bring on board former camp leaders to help with the appropriate identification of victims. They also emphasised the need for coordination and information sharing between the TFV and VPRS so that certain challenges identified in these consultations could be efficiently addressed by the VPRS in the registration process.

VI. THE ROLE OF STAKEHOLDERS

In addition to the victims consulted in the four locations, other relevant stakeholders were consulted on the basis of their key roles and responsibilities towards ensuring effective reparations are delivered to the victims. These stakeholders included local council officers, religious leaders, community leaders, high-level district leaders and members of local civil society. The views expressed here are those of stakeholders in the process, and in part the views of victims on the role of these stakeholders in the process. This reflects the context in which many if not most members in the community were also victims and spoke in the capacity of local leaders, cultural leaders and civil society, as well as victims.

There were four objectives for holding these meetings, including to:

Sensitise stakeholders on the specifics of the Ongwen Reparations Order and inform them about the victims' and community members' submissions on implementing the Order;

Receive observations and opinions from the stakeholders on implementation modalities of the Order, and in response to the submissions made by victims and communities;

Seek to better understand the conditions and challenges faced by these actors in executing their day-to-day duties that may affect the implementation of the reparations programme;

Build trust and good working relations with the actors to enhance cooperation and facilitate implementation of the Order.



A group of men and women from Pajule stand at the forefront as community members line behind them during an election of a representative to serve as cultural institution's voice in matters involving traditional practices during implementation of reparations measures.

On a related point, the Bishop of the Diocese of Northern Uganda, Rt Rev Godfrey Loum recommended that the psychosocial interventions and the awareness-raising programmes against stigma should be carried out concurrently with the other components of the order, such as the symbolic payments, for optimal impact and success of the measures. He reasoned that the current mental health of most of the victims creates an extra layer of vulnerability that needs to be addressed in order for them to fully recover and integrate back into their communities and become constructive members of society.

Finally, they highlighted their important role in managing public expectations of the reparations programme, which will be necessary to avoid frustration and dissatisfaction amongst the communities, especially given that some victims will benefit from the measures pursuant to the case and others will not.

On the issue of memorial prayers, the religious leaders confirmed that, with the support of the reparations programme, victim communities could be mobilised to restart the memorial prayers in places like Pajule and Odek, and strengthen the programming in areas such as Lukodi and Abok where commemorations have experienced lower levels of participation due to resource constraints. Alongside this, they highlighted the need to receive targeted capacity building in the area of psychosocial counselling and the provision of necessary tools, to enable them to meet the community demand for such services. Related to this point, the religious leaders proposed the possibility of focusing their sermons on specific issues relevant to the communities to promote collective healing, reconciliation and peace-building. They further suggested that their institutions could play a role in securing financial resources to support the memorial prayers, leading to eventual sustainability of the initiatives even beyond the life of the reparations programme.

On the matter of apology, whether Ongwen offers an apology or not for his crimes, the religious leaders emphasised the fact that victims still hold the power to forgive and that their forgiveness is dependent on their individual healing and recovery process.

C. Role of Cultural Leaders

On 18 July 2024, a total of 19 cultural leaders representing the Ker Kwaro Acholi (KKA) institution participated in a consultation meeting in Gulu town. All four case locations were represented under the KKA, as well as Abok. Findings from the victim consultations were shared with the group, which largely tended to agree. Victim views on the important role of cultural leaders are also shared here. They then elaborated on the perceived needs of the communities and their potential role in rolling out the reparation measures.

Similar to religious leaders, cultural leaders hold a highly respected position in their communities. This stems from a long history of taking an active role in promoting peace, recovery, reintegration and reconciliation during and after the war in northern Uganda. Thus, this respected group can play a crucial role in facilitating the implementation of the order, especially with respect to the collective measures of psychosocial recovery and socio-economic rehabilitation.

On the issue of psychosocial support and rehabilitation, cultural leaders agreed with the views of victims who stated that cultural leaders have an important role to play in providing counselling services to individuals and households suffering from trauma, as they hold positions of respect across the Acholi and Lango sub-regions, thus their potential to engage with the wider community of victims is great. They hold the potential to foster community healing and restore the social fabric and harmony through engaging in cultural practices that strengthen communities, promoting traditional songs, dances and games to tackle social divisions, stress and trauma and promote social reintegration, especially of ostracised groups.

Another domain where victims felt that cultural leaders could play a critical role in addressing collective trauma and societal breakdown was through leading traditional cleansing practices, which have largely been lacking to date but which are considered important for collective healing and social reintegration. They emphasised that these ceremonies are important not only for returnees but across the war-affected communities, where they believe that some areas need to be cleansed due to the atrocities that happened there. Victims added that cultural leaders can also play an important role in addressing damaging stigma in society, by leading sensitisation efforts and by issuing directives to deter acts of discrimination that contribute to social exclusion.

On their potential role for facilitating implementation of the reparations order, and with the support from the Ongwen reparations programme, the cultural leaders pledged to take up the following initiatives within their communities:

Support the psychological rehabilitation measure in the order by providing counselling services to individuals, households and communities, depending on their needs and in their respective localities. To take this forward, they expressed the need for training and necessary support to build their capacity to provide these services. They suggested the creation of a forum where survivors can be supported and share experiences on recovery and build resilience.

Launch and lead a programme to combat social stigma in the communities. The cultural leaders stated that they are well placed to lead a campaign against stigma as they hold positions of respect in their communities and often provide similar support to their constituents. They suggested that they be provided with specialised training and tools to take this forward. In this connection, they confirmed their willingness and availability to undertake a broad sensitisation campaign on existing regulations on stigma and engage communities in peace-building and community healing activities.

Organise social and recreational activities such as traditional dances, games and theatre dramas to engage the communities and the youth in particular. Related to this, they suggested organising yearly cultural festivals in which all aspects of Acholi and Lango culture are celebrated. They also proposed to launch a mentoring programme for youth to assist with their psychosocial recovery and rehabilitation.

Conduct traditional cleansing ceremonies in certain localities upon request, as many victims still feel this is an unmet need important for their healing and rehabilitation. While such ceremonies were facilitated by NGOs in the past, they are no longer being supported and some localities were not included in the earlier interventions.

From cultural leaders in Abok and Acholi specifically, they proposed to facilitate the reburial of the deceased, still buried in unknown locations, and to return the remains to their families so as to ensure a dignified burial as per traditional cultural practices.

Support the organisation of memorial services at the four massacre sites in the case locations, in cooperation with the religious leaders, the victims and other stakeholders.

Support the mobilisation of victims for registration in the reparations programme, and to provide an oversight role to ensure smooth implementation of the measures in the communities.

On the subject of apology, the cultural leaders overall agreed with the views expressed by the victims on the matter. One comment about apology from Abok that stood out amongst the rest was that if Ongwen should apologise, he should do so through his defence team.

Overall, the cultural leaders recognised the crucial role they can play in achieving a participatory, effective and satisfactory reparations programme and pledged their support to the entire reparations process. For this, they asked to be deeply involved in the planning and implementation process so that they can facilitate the recovery and healing needed in their communities and continue to actively engage the victims in these measures.

D. Role and Views of High-level District Officers

The last group of duty bearers consulted was 14 senior district leaders representing the four case locations and Gulu city, as the main urban hub in the Acholi sub-region. This included the District Local Government Chairpersons and the Mayor, Resident District and City Commissioners, and District Community Development Officers (DCDOs) of Gulu, Oyam, Omoro and Pader districts, and of Gulu city. The objective of this meeting was primarily to inform the group of the Ongwen reparations order and the measures that it calls for, to keep them abreast of the start of the implementation process and to secure their participation and collaboration going forward. The discussion allowed for active participation and practical suggestions for implementing the order.

In turn, the leaders expressed appreciation for the initiative to keep them informed on the matter and pledged their support and collaboration in the implementation process.

The LCV Chairperson of Omoro district summed up the views of the group by saying

“ _____

"As leaders, we want to authenticate the findings of the consultations process so far. It depicts exactly what we know to be true, and we appreciate the participatory approach!"

_____ ”

As part of the discussions, they made the following observations and recommendations:

Social reintegration and rehabilitation programmes are critical for the communities, based on the degree of social and family breakdown that has been witnessed, especially among the youth who need support, training, education and livelihood opportunities to be empowered.

Medical support that has been provided through the TFV victims’ assistance programme should be maintained in the reparations phase, as it has served a critical need of victims with physical injuries resulting from the crimes they suffered.

There is a need to consider and include individuals with special needs in the design of the reparations programming.

The memorialisation activities proposed in the reparations programme should be district-specific and should be integrated into the district local government plans of activities for better management and sustainability.

Beneficiaries of the vocational skills training programmes, the youth in particular, should also receive start-up kits to equip them to make best use of the training and enable them to succeed in becoming financially stable and productive members of society.

VPRS should work closely with former reception centres such as GUSCO, World Vision, Rachele Rehabilitation Centre and KICWA to facilitate the tracing and registration of victims.

In sum, the stakeholder consultation meetings were instrumental in gathering valuable insights and fostering collaboration for the effective implementation of the reparations programme in the region. These consultations provided an opportunity for stakeholders to better understand the content of the Reparations Order, share their views and suggestions on implementation modalities, and clarify their roles in the reparations process. By engaging a diverse group of stakeholders, the meetings reflect a participatory and inclusive approach to addressing the needs and concerns of the victims and their communities.

The success of the reparations programme hinges on the continued collaboration and goodwill of all stakeholders involved. By leveraging the unique strengths and positions of local leaders, religious institutions and cultural bodies, the programme aims to deliver meaningful reparations that not only address past injustices but also build a resilient, tolerant and inclusive society. The insights shared and commitments made during these consultations will play a pivotal role in the design and implementation of the measures, reflecting an inclusive and participatory process that is socially and culturally responsive to the needs of the victims.

E. Role of Civil Society

In connection with the victim consultations, the TFV in collaboration with partner NGOs⁶ organised a joint consultation with a mix of 81 local civil society actors and local government actors in attendance, including law enforcement, Office of the Prime Minister, NIRA and the media drawn from across northern Uganda, particularly the Acholi, Lango, Teso and West Nile regions. The goal of the discussion was to explore ways in which these actors, in particular civil society, can play a role in facilitating implementation of the order at the community level. As with the other stakeholder consultations, the objective was to share information on the Ongwen reparations order and increase awareness of the measures called for in the order, as well as to invite views and suggestions on how these actors can participate in and/or support the implementation of the order, and to anticipate and plan for any potential challenges in the roll-out of the measures.

⁶ Avocats sans Frontières, International Center for Transitional Justice and Gulu's Women Economic Development and Globalization organization.

During the discussions, three key issues emerged for attention, including the need to provide mental support to victims; the need to clarify the scope of the reparations order; and the need to strike strategic partnerships. On the first point, it was highlighted that the VPRS should place particular attention on victims with mental health needs, as they often isolate themselves from society, creating an extra level of vulnerability and underscoring the need to make special efforts to reach out to this group of victims so that they may benefit from the measures. On the second point, it was noted that many stakeholders and victims are not well aware of the content and scope of the reparations order; as such, they recommended that the VPRS collaborate with the Outreach unit to develop clear and sustained messaging and information-sharing and updates on the process going forward, which constitutes important criteria for a victim-centred and participatory approach to the process. Lastly, they recommended the need for strategic partnerships, in particular, the need to adopt strategies for collaboration with cultural, religious and civil society organisations to enable effective implementation of the reparations measures.

Civil society organisations expressed interest in supporting implementation of the order and identified several areas of intervention, including:

Public information dissemination: supporting the Court’s efforts to keep stakeholders informed with clear and accurate information regarding reparations activities.

Expectation management: assisting in expectation management among victims and other stakeholders regarding the nature, scope and timely delivery of the reparations.

Conflict management: support with interventions to prevent and handle community conflicts that may arise from potential grievances resulting from some victims benefitting from the measures and others not, due to the limited scope of the order.

Addressing unmet needs: identifying areas of need among victims that remain unresolved by the reparations programme, providing opportunities for intervention.

Support to VPRS: assisting in the process of victim identification and registration.

Psychotherapeutic services: providing mental health support to victims during the registration process.



The Trust Fund for Victims

International Criminal Court

Oude Waalsdorperweg 10 | 2597 AK | The Hague | The Netherlands

T +31 (0)70 515 85 15 | F +31 (0)70 515 85 55

trustfundforvictims@icc-cpi.int

www.trustfundforvictims.org

All photographs © Trust Fund for Victims.

Reproduced with the informed consent of the individuals depicted.
Reproduction or use without prior written authorisation is prohibited.